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### Citation for published version:

O'Rourke, B & dePalma, R 2016, 'Language-learning holidays: what motivates people to learn a minority language?', *International Journal of Multilingualism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2016.1184667>, <https://doi.org/http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14790718.2016.1184667>

### Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1080/14790718.2016.1184667](https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2016.1184667)

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14790718.2016.1184667>

### Link:

[Link to publication record in Heriot-Watt Research Portal](#)

### Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

### Published In:

International Journal of Multilingualism

### Publisher Rights Statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in International Journal of Multilingualism on 29/05/2016, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/14790718.2016.1184667>

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## **Language-learning holidays: what motivates people to learn a minority language?**

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### **Abstract**

In this article we examine the experiences of a group of language learners as participants in what Garland (2008) refers to as a 'language-learning holiday' in Galicia. We examine what motivates these learners to travel abroad to study the language. We explore the ideologies and practices of these students, who as edutourists (Yarymowich 2005) are consumers and the targets of cultural and linguistic commodification. For dominant world languages such as English, these edutouristic activities are interpreted as a means of accessing global markets. However, in minoritized language contexts this interpretation does not necessarily apply. Such is the case in the north-western part of Spain, where Galician is not seen to offer the

instrumental and/or economic value of its more globally powerful contact language, Spanish. Nevertheless, despite its minoritized status, non-heritage speakers study Galician either through classes in their home countries or by participating in classes during travel to Galicia. The study examines how meanings, ideologies and identities are constructed by these language learners.

**Keywords:** edutourism, minority languages, Galician, language ideologies, authenticity

## **Introduction**

Language schools, whether they are privately run or state-supported, have become a growing industry. As Heller (2010, p. 258) points out, “the commodification of language in the globalized new economy has a direct impact on the organization of the production, distribution, and attribution of value to linguistic resources.” Particularly in the case of globalized languages, learners invest time and money in the language learning process, often travelling to the country in which the language is spoken so as to experience the ‘living’ language and therefore what is regarded as the more ‘authentic’ way of speaking associated with it. The notion of linguistic authenticity is an ideological construct which often arises in discussions around the value of language in modern western societies (Gal and Woolard 1995). Authenticity locates the value of a language to its consequent relationship or ties to a particular community (Woolard 2008) and to be considered authentic, a speech variety or way of speaking needs to be “from somewhere” in the consciousness of its speakers and as such, its meaning becomes profoundly local. As Woolard (ibid.) argues, if such social and territorial roots are not found, then a linguistic variety may lack value in this system. Bucholtz (2003) and Bucholtz and Hall (2004) make the distinction between an ideology of *authenticity* and what they refer to as *authentication*. They highlight that authenticity in itself is not a given in social life but is instead achieved through the assertion of one’s own or another’s identity as genuine or not (Bucholtz 2003). Authenticity and the link to identity can have significant implications for the

acquisition of a new language and can constrain the acquisition and use of a minority language as a second language by a larger population (Woolard 2008), who may see themselves at risk of not sounding sufficiently *natural* or *real* compared with so-called ‘native speakers’. As such, native speakers may then establish a *social closure* which functions as an identity control mechanism, demarcating their privileged position as authentic speakers (O’Rourke and Ramallo 2013). This is a mechanism which can often lead to frustration on the part of newcomers to the language (see McEwan-Fujita 2010 in the Gaelic context) and in some cases actually prevent potential speakers from using the language altogether (O’Rourke 2011a).

Travelling abroad to learn and experience the language in its authentic milieu, thus combining education with a discovery of the local culture, has given rise to the industry that Yarymowich (2005) refers to as ‘edutourism’. While English and other majority languages may have the largest share of this market, the phenomenon also emerges in minority language contexts. Tourism and the pursuit of the ‘authentic’ experiences that this often involves, provides contexts in which minority languages can also be taken up within the global flow of commodities which are sold to and then consumed by learners of these languages. Such practices may produce tensions between the desire to capitalize on linguistic and cultural resources (commodification) and to define a community in terms of its heritage (authentication), as tourism exchanges “destabilize otherwise sedimented notions of insider/outsider, authenticity, culture and place” (Heller, Jaworski, & Thurlow, 2014, p. 427).

Unlike a dominant world language such as English where edutouristic activities can be seen by learners as a means of accessing global markets, in minoritized language contexts this is less likely to hold true. Such is the case of Galician in the north-western part of Spain, a context in which learners are less likely to be motivated by the instrumental and/or economic value of knowing and speaking the language than is the case of its contact language, Spanish. The Galician language is only used in a particular area of Spain (Galicia, and some

neighbouring regions)<sup>1</sup>, and it is virtually impossible to find a situation where knowing Spanish would not suffice (O'Rourke 2011b). Furthermore, in the ostensibly bilingual urban Galician city where our study took place, residents and visitors alike find that Spanish rather than Galician tends to be the *lingua franca*, particularly for speaking with people from other parts of Spain or abroad (DePalma 2015). Therefore, one of the most intriguing questions of the study was to examine how non-Galician students were drawn to learning the local language and becoming what can be referred to by O'Rourke and Pujolar (2013) as *new speakers*, that is, individuals who chose to acquire a minority language as an additional language to their first language and who to varying degrees adopt it as part of their multilingual linguistic repertoire. The initial theorizing and conceptualization of the new speaker label focused on minority language contexts which were revitalized with some measure of success as a result of more favourable language policies, but which faced the consequent problem of social differentiation between first and second-language speakers, and tensions over ownership and legitimate language rights (O'Rourke and Pujolar 2015). In minority language contexts, including Galician, there has been a growing awareness amongst sociolinguists and policy makers of the contradictory and paradoxical effects that language revitalization initiatives were having. Such effects were based on long-held assumptions and ideologies about language, identity and authenticity in which the concept of the 'native speaker' played a pivotal role.

Research on new speakers of Galician or *neofalantes* (O'Rourke and Ramallo 2013; 2015) has tended to focus on the experiences of Galicians who were brought up speaking Spanish in the home and at some stage in their lives (usually adolescence) make a conscious decision to adopt Galician and use it as their habitual language. The focus has been, as with research on other minoritized languages (O'Rourke, 2011; O'Rourke, Pujolar and Ramallo

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<sup>1</sup> There is a school of thought that considers Galician and Portuguese to be variants of the same language, and they do have common historical roots. Nevertheless, the *The Real Academia Galega* (Royal Galician Academy) and the *Instituto da Língua Galega* (Institute for Galician Language) consider Galician to be a separate language.

2015; O'Rourke and Walsh 2015; Costa 2015; Jaffe 2015; Hornsby 2015) on the experiences of people learning and adopting languages that have historically become marginalized in their own national context, pointing to motivational factors such as family history, the impact of local language policies, and the impact of shared social identities. Since its initial conceptualization, the new speaker label has been extended and is also used to connect with scholars working in other multilingual contexts. This has included research on new speakers in the context of migration (Duchêne, Moyer, and Roberts 2013; Márquez-Reiter and Martin Rojo 2014), new speakers in the context of English as a global language (Cook 1999; Davies 2003) and the linguistic practices of transnational networks connected to youth cultures often associated with the use of international languages such as English, Chinese, French, Spanish (Androutsopoulos 2004). The 'new speaker' phenomenon is thus used to shed new light on the processes of production and reproduction of sociolinguistic difference, ideologies of legitimacy and their implications for social inequalities (O'Rourke and Pujolar 2015). Much research on new speakers of Galician, has focussed on the social and linguistic practices of Spanish-speaking Galicians who engage in the process of majority language displacement and make a conscious decision to 'become' new speakers of the language (see O'Rourke and Ramallo 2013). Our study looks specifically at the case of individuals who were not brought up in Galicia and who choose to learn a minoritized language, such as Galician, which was not present or even particularly well-known in their home countries or regions. Their profile is therefore somewhat similar to the case of foreign language students but without the corresponding instrumental or economic motivation associated with becoming new speakers of an international language such as English or Spanish.

In this article we examine the experiences of a group of such new speakers, who as language learners participate in what Garland (2008, p. 12) refers to as a 'language-learning holiday' in Galicia. We examine what motivates these learners to travel abroad to study a

minority language such as Galician. We explore the ideologies and practices of these students, who as edutourists, are the targets and potential consumers of cultural and linguistic commodification. At the same time, we examine the ways in which students themselves commodify Galician culture and language, in their attempts to capture what they perceive as an authentic learning experience and/or to gain entrance to a minoritized linguistic and cultural group. In the case of a minoritized language, this commodification takes on ideological dimensions that transcend the purely instrumental learning of Galician and implies taking a particular stance towards the language and its speakers that goes beyond reaping social and economic benefits in terms of access to broader markets and higher social strata. Indeed, learning a minoritized language provides social access, but such access is mediated by desires to belong to social circles that are, in part, defined by counter-ideologies. As Pomeranz (2002) points out, ideologies differ from individual beliefs because they are shared and enacted through everyday linguistic interactions that are imbued with power relations. The study examines how these students construct their own meanings, ideologies and identities in relation to the Galician language. Here, we understand language ideologies as normative and evaluative constructs involving beliefs about the way the world is with respect to language (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006). As Kroskrity (2000, p. 8) observes: “A [society] member’s notion of what is ‘true’, ‘morally good’, or ‘aesthetically pleasing’ about language and discourse are grounded in social experience and often demonstrably tied to his or her political-economic interests. These notions often underlie attempts to use language as the site at which to promote, protect, and legitimate those interests.” Understood in this way, language ideologies are more than a set of shared cultural values (see Woolard, 1998), a concept often inherent in other forms of research on metalanguage including language attitudes and folk linguistics.

In our study we will frame our analysis of the language ideologies displayed by Galician language learners within a more widely shared system of understanding of the relationship between language and society in Galicia and Spain. Our analysis is set against a backdrop of the dominant language ideologies which are in circulation in modern Western nation-states including the ‘one nation, one language ideology’ (Woolard, 1998), the ‘standard language ideology’ (Milroy, 1999), the ideology of ‘societal multilingualism as a problem’ (Blommaert, 1999), the ideology of ‘the essentialist link between language and identity’ (Blommaert and Verschueren, 1998), and the ideology of the ‘social hierarchy of languages’ (Weber, 2009), all of which are likely to shape and influence the individual language ideologies of the Galician language learners in our study. Drawing on de Bres (2014) in our analysis we seek to examine the extent to which the individually expressed ideologies of these social actors coincide with *dominant language ideologies*, react against them or constitute a complex mixture of both (see Briggs 1998; Kroskrity 2000).

## **The study**

The data for this article consists of a period of fieldwork involving three weeks of participant observation, in-depth interviews, and surveys with adult learners attending Galician language classes that were administered through a Galician university and funded by the local Galician government. The location of the language course in the bilingual city of Vigo differs from other minority language courses such as Irish where the eduotouristic experience is often authenticated by the fact that courses tend to take place in the Irish-speaking heartlands of the rural Gaeltacht (see Garland, 2008) and are often perceived by Irish language learners as authentic spaces in which to engage with a ‘native’ Irish speaking community (O’Rourke 2015; O’Rourke and Walsh 2015). In previous years Galician language courses had followed a somewhat similar model, taking place in a smaller rural town in the centre of Galicia with a



markedly stronger Galician-speaking population. However, this was discontinued based on student feedback that they were too far away from amenities, prompting a relocation of the courses to the more cosmopolitan but at the same time more strongly Spanish-speaking coastal city of Vigo.

These intensive courses consist of 3 weeks of daily classes (morning classes) and afternoon/evening cultural activities. The 18 students who enrolled on this course were placed in two ability groups (beginner,  $n=10$  and advanced,  $n=8^2$ ) based on their own selection and, in some cases, in consultation with teachers. The two instructors were Galician and had studied the Galician language formally to degree levels, and individual interviews revealed that they also had specific training in Galician literature and culture and were strongly committed to the Galician revitalization project.

Extended, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 18 of the students participating in the course (see appendix, Rubric for semi-structured interviews). The two course instructors and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor for University Extension were also interviewed, using an open structure: instructors were asked about personal and professional experiences with the Galician language in general, and with teaching this course in particular, and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor was asked about the university's role in teaching and promoting the language education in Galicia and abroad. Students were interviewed twice during the course, once in the first week and later in the last week, and they completed two written surveys that corresponded with the interview schedule. Students were given the option to select the language of their survey (Galician or English) and of their interview (Galician, Spanish or English). Both researchers in the study were graduates of similar Galician language courses and they supplemented this personal experience with an

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<sup>2</sup> One of these students was the first author, who was enrolled in the intermediate level class and participated fully as a student throughout the course.

observation in both the beginner and advanced classes. One of the authors adopted a participatory researcher perspective during the study, as a student of the advanced level of the course.

Our research questions included:

- What reasons do students have for signing up for the Galician course?
- What experiences did they have with Galician?
- What are student goals concerning the Galician language?

Participants in the study were asked about their motivations for studying Galician and their experiences on the course. The aim of the interviews was to elicit information about how and why participants of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds choose to use and learn Galician. The interviews also provided insights into their language ideologies and perceptions about the Galician sociolinguistic context. Such issues were also discussed amongst students in class, during coffee breaks, and during social events organised in the evening, data that was collected by the participant researcher in the form of reflective observation notes. Data analysis was conducted using the Atlas-ti programme, and consisted of an inductive process of coding. The data was first coded according to initial themes related to the survey or interview questions themselves (for example, professional, educational, and social reasons to study the Galician language), as well as new themes arising from the data itself (for example, romantic and familial relationships with Galician people). Interesting observations, tendencies or exceptions in the data were recorded in the form of analytical memos (for example, ideologies related to minority languages). The two broad themes discussed in the following data analysis section (the course as edutourism and the relationships between authenticity and language ideologies) emerged as broad analytical categories as a result of this inductive process.

## Results and Analysis

Students ranged in age from 21 to 61 years of age, with the majority (13 of 18) concentrated in their twenties. They came from 10 different countries: Chile, Croatia, Finland, Germany (2), Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Palestine, Peru, Poland (5), and Spain (3). The three Spaniards came from other regions of Spain, although one of these had been born in Galicia and moved to Catalonia (in the northeast of Spain) when he was 9 years old. Based on our surveys and interviews, we found that fifteen of the 18 students reported having some previous experience with the culture. Of these, one was born in Galicia, one was the grandson of Galician emigrants, 6 currently had a Galician romantic partner (and for that reason were all contemplating the possibility of staying long-term), 4 had studied at a Galician university, and 7 had studied Galician in their country of origin (5 at university and two at a public language school).<sup>3</sup> A striking trend in the data was that none of the participants reported purely instrumental goals, as one might expect from a more globalised language such as English or Spanish; interest in learning the language was always rooted in its relation to the local culture, and this ranged from the desire to continue future touristic visits, to maintaining personal and familial ties to the region, to eventually setting and finding work.

As adult learners who actively chose to learn this minority language in conditions where knowing the language is not necessary for everyday communication, their participation in the course demonstrates a degree of reflexive consciousness of issues of language and identity. The heterogeneity of adult Galician language student profiles, motivations and linguistic trajectories thus offer us nuanced pictures of what it means for them to become speakers of the language in the current Galician sociolinguistic context.

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<sup>3</sup> We have chosen to present this information in aggregate form to maintain a degree of confidentiality. Since the sample size was so small (N=18), it would be easy to discern the identities of participants based on their individual profiles.

### *1. The Galician language course as an 'edutouristic' experience: the pleasure principle*

Based on participant observations and interviews with participants and teachers, we found that the language courses offered by the local Galician government share many of the hallmarks of edutourism. The courses consist of a combination of formal classroom language instruction where students go through the typical type of activities associated with a language learning class. This is combined with afternoon, evening and weekend activities in which students are taken on trips of the local and surrounding areas. These included trips (for example, guided tours of the historic part of the city and of a pre-Roman rock art excavation site) and guest speakers specializing in various topics (for example, Galician literature, music, and dance). The blending of tourism and language study in the course is striking because of its emphasis on social activities and casual classroom atmosphere. Different events were put on for students to create an 'authentic' Galician experience. This included a *queimada*<sup>4</sup> and a tour of the city led by actors depicting traditional historical-mythical characters in historical garb and in doing so authenticating their experience.

This design of the course to include not just linguistic but also cultural elements contributes to the edutourism experience by commodifying Galician culture in a particular way, and establishing the language as an essential aspect of it. In this sense, the designers imbue the edutourism experience with an ideology that relates language and identity (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998), implicitly refuting alternative ideologies of 'one nation, one language' (Woolard 1998) and 'societal multilingualism as a problem' (Blommaert 1999), also present in the Spanish state. As we have described earlier, the Spanish language is more than sufficient for communicative purposes in Galicia, and is more widely used in

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<sup>4</sup> The *quemada* is a traditional Galician punch made from spirits, sugar, lemon peel and spices, which is then set on fire while chanting a ceremonial incantation.

urban areas such as Vigo. The students' tour of Galicia might just as easily have been mediated through an alternative frame that reinforced Spanish as the linguistic component of the essential Galician experience, an experience common to many visitors who may leave with little or no awareness that a minority language even exists in the region. Instead, more essentialised symbols of Galician identity such as the *quemada* are drawn upon to authenticate the students' experience, presupposing as Heller (2003, p. 475) suggests, an ideology of "essentialised ethnonationalism".

Since the course is funded by the autonomous community of Galicia, students taking the course are not asked to invest money in the language learning process but instead are enticed into doing the course by having it paid for, an incentive which is in line with the broader policy of promoting the language. This promotion begins with an educational campaign, funded by the Galician local government, to raise awareness of the language and culture abroad. Some of the students had become aware of Galician through optional courses offered in their home universities within Iberian or Spanish studies programmes, although it is rarely if ever a core degree subject. As the Assistant Vice-Chancellor of University Extension told us in his interview, "The people who come, they fall in love with Galicia, and they become our ambassadors." He added that the instructors on these courses abroad themselves serve as cultural ambassadors, meant to inspire in their students an appreciation for Galician culture and, we would add, a language ideology that establishes the Galician language as the appropriate vehicle for that culture.

Our study suggests that this system seems to be having the desired effect: the students on the course who had studied Galician in their home universities told us that their Galician language tutors had inspired them to take the summer course. At the end of one of the organized visits to a local archaeological site, the director of the University's Linguistic Normalization Unit (which organizes the language course) concluded the visit with a few

words of thanks to the organizers, adding that such visits were important so that “...people who visit from abroad are going to leave with a very good impression of this place and the things that you can see in Galicia.” His comments are significant in that they again point to the strong focus on the touristic experience of the language course and the emphasis on selling Galicia as a place to which these students may wish to return or to tell others about.

Since the university does not turn a profit from the course, it contrasts with many other edutourism experiences in that immediate economic gain is not one of the goals of the project; nevertheless, we argue that students remain positioned as consumers of the authentic Galician experience. For many of them, their experiences and comments suggested that it was important to them to feel that they were learning something and, at the same time, enjoying some of the more traditional pleasures of summer holidays in the form of sea views, good food, and friendly natives. In this sense, some found the ‘edu’ component to be a pleasant add-on to more recreational motivations. As Coupland and Coupland (2014) point out, the element of simple pleasure is inevitably a motivating factor in edutourism that seeks to recreate authentic cultural experiences, but that pleasure should not be seen as deauthenticating. This relationship, expressed explicitly in the Director of Linguistic Normalization’s hope that these students develop a “very good impression” of Galicia, is also evident in some students’ justifications for their participation in the course. Monika, a medical student from Poland, had heard about the course from friends of hers who had spent the previous summer in Galicia and was looking for something educational but at the same time fun. She had been to Galicia the year before and hiked part of the famous Santiago Trail<sup>5</sup>. She had also taken a taster course in Galician at her university a few years before that.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Camiño de Santiago* is a traditional pilgrimage leading to the Galician Santiago Cathedral, which in modern times continues to attract international tourists.

Interestingly, however, while she could have just as easily opted for a Spanish language summer course, she was more strongly tempted by Galician, a language and region which she and others had known virtually nothing about:

Monika: I was very impressed by Galicia, the views, and the people who are very helpful and nice, and even if they don't understand you... They are very friendly....

Researcher: And then why did you decide you come back, to come here for this course?

Monika: Because finally I wanted to, I wanted to learn this language more. Because I took this course as something, something interesting and something new, and I wanted to go further. I think this is the reason<sup>6</sup>.

In her survey response, she attributed a high value to the educational component of the course, but a closer look at her interview comments reveals that the touristic element of the course was strongly evident in her description of city and its amenities, namely closeness to the beach, landscape, facilities etc.

Monika: It's very lovely. I like the hills of the city, and we go up and down, up and down. And we have a view of the ocean, of the port, from our apartment. And it's very nice, because it's a big city, but you don't feel it, that it's such a big city.... And it's, it's nice because you know, we have the beaches, and there's is the port, there is the old town, and we live in the centre, almost the centre, so everywhere is *cerca* [close] not so far. (laughs)...

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<sup>6</sup> Quotes from interviews conducted in Spanish and Galician have been translated by the authors.

Monika's friend Sandra, also a student on the course, tells a somewhat similar story, where Galicia's attraction as a holiday destination seemed to play a strong role in her decision to take the course. Her prior experience walking the Santiago Trail also had an important effect on her decision to enrol in the first level of the Galician summer course. She even expressed plans to return the following year for the advanced level which, while these may not come to fruition once the excitement of the adventure has worn off, do suggest that language study is positioned as a secondary motivation, perhaps as means to legitimize a new holiday adventure. As her comments indicate, the intention to enrol in the advanced course, like her enrolment in the first, centred round her holiday plan, and was described as a distraction from her studies:

Sandra: But I don't know what my next vacations will look like, so I don't know...

Researcher: And you're studying medicine, so this must be a lot of time, and effort...

Sandra: I also have to do something else, because it's difficult for me, it's difficult to focus on one thing all the time. I have to do something else.

Marko, a student of Spanish from Croatia provides another example of someone who just came to the Galician language by chance and where the classic lures of tourism, exploration and enjoyment, played a significant factor in travelling abroad to study at the three-week summer language school. Marko's programme of study at his home university contained a language learning element in which Spanish was a core component. As part of this, he had taken an optional Galician language course prior to embarking. His choice of Galician over the other possible language options he could avail of was however purely circumstantial and was in large part determined by the fact that he had arrived late for induction and all places on the more popular Catalan language course had been filled. He



admitted to knowing little about Galicia prior to that other than its two main football teams, *Celta de Vigo* and *Deportivo de Coruña* and where these two cities were on the map. Nevertheless, in retrospect, he was pleased with the chain of circumstances, which he described as an opportunity to improve his Galician and Spanish while at the same time visiting Galicia and travelling round Spain:

Marko: The most important thing for me is that I improve my Galician, and my Spanish also.

Researcher: OK, interesting.

Marko: And I wanted to come to see Galicia and to see Spain if I travel a little bit.

Even when everyday tourism was not the principal expressed reason for doing the course it still played an important role, and most students combined the course in one way or another with a touristic element. A Palestinian student, Sireen, was completing a Masters degree in the neighbouring city of Santiago but wanted to visit a new city, despite the fact that she could have very well have done the same course in Santiago. One of the Polish students, Ania, who had spent the year as a university exchange student in the neighbouring city of Santiago, was also taking the course in Vigo to discover a new city. Another Polish student, Magda, chose Vigo because of its coastal location, thus satisfying her personal interest in sailing:

Magda: I'm quite impressed with the port, which is very very large, the whole coast is taken up by the port, and the view in the afternoon is beautiful.. Also, I sail...

She had even brought a friend of hers along who was not taking the course but who was simply availing of the chance to spend a holiday in Spain with her friend. Like many of her fellow students, Magda had been attracted by the Galician-government-sponsored course offered at her university, which was offered as an elective as part of her degree in Iberian studies. Nevertheless, her friend had no such academic relationship with Galicia, which suggests that Magda did indeed fulfil the role of ‘cultural ambassador’ as promoted by this initiative, in terms of promoting Galician tourism among her friends at home.

These students, who generally lacked any prior relationship or interest in the Galician language or culture, responded to a Galician language promotion initiative that targeted them as potential linguistic allies. While these are socio-political rather than economic interests, the students responded to these campaigns because they fit the profile of potential edutourists: many of them were young, curious, and prone to develop associations between the positive experiences they had in Galicia with their experience of learning the language. At the same time, they were not passive consumers. They actively construct their “very good impressions” in Galicia, drawing in part on positive experiences they’d previously had with Galician courses in their home university, a certain degree of nostalgia they had developed through prior visits to Galicia, or even second-hand recommendations from friends. Completing the language and culture course gave them the opportunity to return with a sense of satisfaction at not just having a good time, but acquiring knowledge and experience that then would become part of their academic and personal profile. As Thurlow and Jowrski (2014, p. 484) put it:

Just as tourists become viewing subjects through their ways of seeing the world, it is through their bodies that they become doing subjects. And in both cases, their viewing and their doing also produce tourists as knowing subjects with a sense of the world as available and obtainable.

## *2. In search of the authentic Galician experience: expectations and language ideologies*

For many students, the element of edutourism was supplemented by stronger personal ties with Galicia, for example because of family (2) or romantic (6) connections, or because they had developed friendship circles as university exchange students (5). The reasons students gave during interviews and casual conversations for learning Galician ranged from wanting to connect with their own Galician heritage to a desire to become part of the local community, and many of these involved a sense of solidarity with what they perceived as an oppressed linguistic and cultural minority. In these cases, the symbolic value of the language itself takes on a stronger role, both in terms of student motivation and expectations of the prevalence of the language in the community.

As we have mentioned earlier, minoritized languages may fail to offer the communicative usefulness that typically characterise languages often featured in other edutourism courses such as English language courses. Our data revealed an awareness of this tendency among our students, who complained that Spanish was the default language of conversation in the city of Vigo, beyond the confines of the Galician language course. Placido, a Chilean of Galician heritage, was disappointed by his early conversations with a taxi driver, who questioned why he or anyone else would want to learn the language:

My experience with Galician language, the first one that I had in the taxi from the airport – I told [the driver] that I came to study Galician, and that I came from Chile. He found it absurd, ridiculous even...so much effort to learn Galician! I told him that it's more than just a language – it's culture, living together, sharing. That was – it surprised me a lot that he didn't speak Galician, and that he told me that in Vigo people didn't speak much Galician.

As his comment reveals, for Placido the Galician language had cultural and social significance tied with its relationship to his family history.

Placido was one of two students who had family connections with Galicia. For them, the Galician language was seen as an important part of connecting with that heritage. His grandparents had emigrated to South America from Galicia a century previous and settled there. Placido saw language and culture as inseparable, 'they go together. For me, they are the same.' He chose to conduct his interviews in Galician, which he had been studying in his home city of Santiago de Chile. He described his motivation for learning Galician as strongly personal:

Placido: My grandparents were Galician. My grandfather was from Santiago de Compostela, and my grandmother was from Vigo. I first came to Galicia two, three, four years ago to find information about my grandfather. I found his...baptismal certificate in a church in Santiago de Compostela. And now I am applying for Spanish citizenship.

While a citizenship application may seem to imply a more pragmatic goal of trying to integrate into Galician society, Placido, a retired architect, expressed no intention of actually emigrating to Galicia. He described himself as too old for such a difficult social change, and his profession as one that requires years of establishing networks of contacts and relationships:

Placido: And I don't even have any interest in work. I had thought I would like to come and live here, but...it's difficult to adapt to a new society, I'm no longer young enough

for that...and my profession, I'm an architect...that works through contacts, relations, by means of networks...

The other student of Galician heritage was Miguel, who was born in Galicia but moved to Barcelona with his parents when he was nine. Although his father was Galician and from a Galician-speaking family, Miguel's parents only spoke Spanish in the home, something which Miguel related to his mother's Spanish-speaking origins as a native of the Canary Islands. Nevertheless, he recalled hearing Galician spoken occasionally when he was growing up as part of annual summer visits to Galicia. Like Placido, Miguel's heritage link with Galician culture seemed to be a key motivating factor which inspired him to learn the language. He belonged to a Galician Cultural Centre in Barcelona and it was there that he had taken beginner and more advanced courses in the language.

The seriousness of his endeavours in acquiring the language is evidenced by the fact that he had even contemplated going back to college to do a degree in Galician. Nevertheless, like Placido, Galician proficiency would not have any impact on his professional trajectory. Such efforts to learn the language in the absence of more pragmatic motivating factors, as well as his expressed interest in reclaiming his notion of Galician heritage, suggest that he was seeking an authentic Galician experience, which was to be mediated by an authentic language experience. In his interviews, which he also chose to conduct in Galician, Miguel expressed a profound nostalgia for his happy childhood in Galicia, 'I was very happy during those nine years that I lived in Santiago with my family...' Despite the many years he lived in Barcelona, he explicitly defined himself as Galician, 'I come from Barcelona, but I am Galician.' Also like Placido, his experiences in everyday social interactions in Vigo did not live up to his expectations of living the language. He described actively trying to capture this vision of authentic language experience, by seeking out bakeries and cafes where people

might be likely to speak with him in Galician, “I know where I have to go to speak Galician with Galician people.”

Ironically, while these two students of Galician heritage expressed no intentions of returning to Galicia to live, there were quite a few students with no Galician heritage who seemed to be developing social ties. The desire to integrate into the local community was another key motivation expressed by many participants on the course. Sireen, for example, had acquired the language during a year of studies as a Masters student in at the University of Santiago. She had studied Spanish formally before coming to Galicia and picked up Galician from those around her, ‘I learned Spanish before, I learned the structure and all that. Galician I learned only by ear. I still don’t know how to write it.’

In her circle of friends in Santiago, Galician was the language that seemed to predominate and she commented that even though she didn’t understand everything in the beginning, she gradually acquired an ability to understand and speak it. Her reasoning behind learning the language and wanting to consolidate her knowledge of it through her participation in the summer course was, she explained, driven by her desire to understand Galicia and its culture, a place which she had come to love and to which one day she wished to return:

Sireen: I’m living here, so to understand the culture...I really like this culture, I love it, and I’d like to come back. I’d like to learn more about this culture, and for that I think it’s crucial to learn the language.

Placido and Miguel’s experiences do not, at first glance, seem to have much in common with Sireen’s. Their motivations seem quite different, since Sireen’s academic trajectory and development of social circles supports her stated intention to settle in Galicia, while her two

classmates have already established strong family and professional ties in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, these three students share a sense of connection with Galicia (either through past family ties or a projected, hypothetical future) and the common ideology that the Galician language is a crucial part of the culture. In this sense, they have constructed Galicia in a way that goes beyond the role of cultural ambassador and raises certain expectations that, to some extent, go unmet by the Galician diglossic reality (DePalma, 2015).

For some students, more specific linguistic ideologies informed their experience of the Galician language course, particularly those that challenge the higher social status of dominant languages and call for minority language revitalization efforts. These perspectives coincide with those of the Linguistic Normalization Unit of the University of Galicia, which organized the course, and whose institutional goal is to revitalize the Galician language. Activities sponsored by this entity involve both language education (in terms of competences) and initiatives designed to improve the social status of the language, particularly at the university level. This second type of initiative can be seen reflected in the cultural content of the course, which as mentioned earlier, included not only more typical touristic pursuits, such as architectural and gastronomic attractions, but also elements of traditional and artistic culture (literature, music, etc.).

The fact that the course incorporated both linguistic and cultural elements reflects language ideologies that identify Galician as the appropriate medium for Galician culture and, implicitly, cast the socio-cultural dominance of Spanish in Galician society as a problem. This ideology was expressed more explicitly by one of the guest speakers, who offered an historical analysis of the legal and political processes that have led to the current marginalization of the Galician language. These design elements of the course opposed, directly or indirectly, competing ideologies that cast the majority language (Spanish in this case) as more useful, valuable, and associated with a unified Spanish nationalist identity.

In some cases, students made connections between such ideologies in Galician and in other contexts with which they were more familiar. Madalena from Peru commented on the negative attitudes toward Galician that she had heard expressed even by Galician speakers. She compared this with similar attitudes toward Quechua in her own country, and lamented the fact that she herself did not speak the language, ‘It’s part of the patrimony of our culture. So that’s a shame, because I don’t know Quechua.’ Raquel from Asturias, a neighbouring region of Spain in which the Asturian language does not share co-official status with Spanish, reported that she had made the effort to study the Asturian language, but could not speak it well. Referring specifically to the guest speaker’s lecture on Galician language politics, Raquel made reference to the universality of such processes, ‘In the end, the lies told about minoritized languages are the same about all of them. He is talking about Galician, but it can be extrapolated to all of the minoritized languages.’

While these students explicitly expressed solidarity with the language ideologies expressed in the course design, these were also implicitly expressed in some of the decisions made by other students to speak Galician in certain social circles. Croatian Marko, for example, described himself as ‘lucky’ to have a Galician “patriot” as a housemate, with whom he enjoyed speaking the language. Hungarian Alexandra described her future Galician in-laws as habitual Galician speakers who were pleased that she was learning the language, despite the fact that they could understand her when she spoke to them in Spanish. Annelies from Germany was hoping to be able to speak Galician with her friends who, while they were completely fluent in Spanish, preferred to speak Galician among themselves for socio-political reasons:

Researcher: Do they know that you’re taking a Galician course?

Annelies: Yes.



Researcher: What do they think?

Annelies: (Laughing) They think I'm crazy...They were really surprised. But I think they were also happy. Because they're very proud of their language.

These students were not only influenced by everyday language activists (including Galician *neofalantes*), who choose to speak Galician as a manifestation of their political convictions, but they strive to participate themselves in such practices. As Urry and Larsen (2011) argue, the tourist gaze goes beyond simple looking. It is not just that tourists co-construct their perceptions through the lens of prior experience and existing ideologies, but that they actively, bodily participate in the process. This desire to participate in what is presented and perceived as authentic culture constitutes what Coupland and Coupland (2014) describe as the performative frame of heritage tourism. Among our students, such performances were generally inspired by social relationships, although we were surprised to find that these ranged from profound and established (future partners and in-laws) to new and probably fleeting (friends and roommates). While we have no way of knowing whether these relationships and the ideological commitments they inspired will leave lasting impressions, they may well leave some impression on the local community.

In the Galician context, choosing to speak Galician is associated with a new speaker identity, which implies linguistic ideologies usually reserved for Galician people. Foreigners performing such an identity are likely to invoke a reaction on the part of the Galician locals. Urry and Larsen (2011, p. 23) describe mutual gazing on the part of tourists and locals as a process highlighting difference, "Locals gaze upon tourists' practices, bodies, clothes and cameras and find them amusing, disgusting, curious or attractive." Nevertheless, in heritage tourism involving a minority language, adopting certain language practices communicate language ideologies that may be appreciated by locals and interpreted as a sign of solidarity.

Two of the students on the course were interviewed by a local newspaper concerning their experience as Galician language learners from abroad. The newspaper column which appeared the following day talked about the students who “crossed borders to study and put down roots in our land (*cruzaron fronteras para estudiar y echar raíces en nuestra tierra*). We also observed positive appraisals of these students by locals during the extra-curricular activities organized as part of the course. On a visit to one of the local museums, the tour guide praised the students for their interest in the language commenting that this was something which surpassed that of Galicians themselves. She said it gave her great pride to think that they had chosen to learn the language explaining that she wanted “shout it out and let the world know” that there were people such as them learning Galician, a language which she told the students was historically associated with poverty and rurality. It thus followed that students were not only expected to serve as cultural ambassadors when they returned to their own counties, but that they were also held up as examples to the Galician people to illustrate the value of the minoritized language. Trosset (1986) and Jaffe (1999) have shown that while speakers of minority languages tend to be surprised or suspicious of efforts to learn the language on the part of foreign learners, social and linguistic assimilation can come quickly after an outsider’s ability to speak the language is recognised, following any initial period of denial by the community.

## **Conclusions**

The reasons for studying a minoritized language such as Galician frequently differ from those studying economically and politically powerful international languages such as English. The ideologies expressed by the participants in this study reflect the complexity and conflicts of language revitalization efforts. Taken together, these students’ accounts of their motivations for language learning present a Galicia in which the minoritized language is a

significant symbolic element of the culture that is connected to meaningful forms of participation in social and professional networks, despite the dominance of Spanish in everyday life and the fact that not all Galicians speak the language.

Foreign Galician language learners were frequently praised for learning the language, something that we observed on numerous occasions. These responses seem to reflect a kind of publicity motive on the part of the Galician government, where students served as a way of showing to non-Galician speaking Galicians that even foreigners were choosing to learn the language and were doing it well. These incidents reveal a symbolic motivation in the course design, as certainly the overall number of foreigners who participate in these programmes, although not negligible, are unlikely to have any real impact on sociolinguistic shifts in Galicia, but will rather serve as models or ‘cultural ambassadors’ for Galician language and culture not only in their countries of origin, but within Galicia itself.

On the individual level, the nature of students’ imagined future use of Galician varied widely in terms of whether or not they anticipated speaking the language extensively or being accepted as speakers. For a few, conversational competence was a clear goal embodied in their efforts to use Galician in and out of class. In other cases, however, learners evoked more limited objectives that nevertheless could have important social integration functions: for example, pronouncing Galician place names in an authentically Galician rather than a Spanish way or being able to speak with their in-laws, friends, and romantic partners, even when these could speak Spanish as well as and sometimes better than Galician. Not changing the language of conversation (from Galician to Spanish) by their mere presence implies a certain sense of belonging and solidarity with those Galicians who choose to support the minority language.

These more modest goals did not necessarily involve extensive, active spoken competence. For the two students of Galician heritage, now living in Barcelona and Chile, the

Galician language could be said to play a role in what Jaffe (2015) terms ‘identity completion,’ that is, the repair of sociolinguistic rupture in their personal trajectories. Even so, this repair required a relatively minimum competence in the language and was largely symbolic, given the fact that they both lived in contexts which would not require the language, or even provide much opportunity for its use.

While much research on new speakers of Galician has tended to focus on the social and linguistic practices of Spanish-speaking Galicians who ‘become’ new speakers of the language, our study looked specifically at the case of individuals from outside of Galicia who choose to learn the local language and to varying degrees adopt it as part of their multilingual linguistic repertoire. Their profile is somewhat similar to the case of foreign language students but without the corresponding instrumental or economic motivation associated with becoming new speakers of an international language such as English or Spanish. New speakers of non-Galician heritage such as those who participated in our study allow us to consider the role of ‘outsiders’ to the revitalization of a minoritized language. While the presence of learners from outside of Galicia and their desire to further the learning and use of Galician are not likely to fulfil the traditional goals of language revitalization such as intergenerational transmission or even the daily use of Galician in Galicia more generally, they can be seen to provide inspiration for locals and potentially a renewed sense of hope in attempts to revitalize the language.

## **Acknowledgements**

Research trips for fieldwork and for the writing of this paper was supported by a Small Research Grant in Arts and Humanities awarded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The article has also benefitted from discussions around the concept of ‘new speakers’ funded

under the auspices of COST Action IS1306 “New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe: Opportunities and Challenges”

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## **Appendix: Rubric for semi-structured interviews**

These questions are translated directly from the Galician, as they appeared in the original research proposal that was presented to the course organizers. They served as the rubric for the two semi-structured interviews. The questions involving initial motivations and experiences were asked in the first interview, and those relating to experiences and reflections on the course itself were asked in the second interview. There were no students who did not complete this course, so the questions designed for them were eliminated.

What were your reasons for signing up for the course?

What experiences did you have with the Galician language beyond the classroom?

In the university

Outside of the university

What experience with the Galician language did you have before beginning the course?

Direct/Indirect

What are your goals with respect to the Galician language?

Linguistic goals

Cultural goals

What are some of the more and less interesting aspects of the course?

For students who did not complete the course, what factors influenced this decision?

Personal

Logistic

Characteristics of the course itself

For students who did complete the course, what factors influenced this decision?

What are some of the benefits of having taken this course?

Personal/social

Professional  
Academic